

# THE BRAHMAVÂDIN.

“एकं सत् विशावदुधावदन्ति.”

“That which exists is One: sages call it variously.”—*Rigveda*, I, 164, 46.

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## HEAVEN AND EARTH.

1. Which of these two is the earlier, and which later? How were they born? Who knows it, O ye sages? They of themselves support all that exists. Day and night move on as if with wheels.

2. The two, motionless and footless, uphold a numerous offspring having feet and moving. In the way in which the son on his parent's lap is protected, protect us ever, Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

3. I pray for Aditi's gift which is pure, perfect, celestial, imperishable, and worthy, to inspire worship. Produce this, Heaven and Earth, for him who praises you. Protect us Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

4. May we approach Heaven and Earth who are untroubled by pain, who satisfy us with food, and are the parents of the gods. The two are among the gods both during day and night. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

5. Heaven and Earth, ye who go together, who are young, whose boundaries meet, who are like twin sisters in their parent's lap, and who kiss the centre of the world together, protect us from fearful sin.

6. I call, by means of the sacrifice which satisfies the gods, the two great parents who form wide homes, and who, beautiful to look on, uphold immortality. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

7. I praise, with reverence at this sacrifice, the two who are wide, vast, and manifold; whose boundaries are far away, and who are all-sustaining, blessed, and liberal in gifts. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

8. Whatever sin we have, at any time, committed against the gods, against a friend, or against the chieftain of our family, may this hymn of praise be its expiation. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful sin.

9. May the two, who bless and are friends of man, protect me; may the two preservers bestow on me their protection. Rejoicing with food we, singers of hymns, desire, O ye gods, abundance to be more and more liberal.

10. I, who possess good intelligence, have uttered this excellent hymn to Heaven and to Earth, and for all to hear. Preserve us from reproach and sin; and, being near us, Father and Mother, protect us with your help.

11. O Heaven and Earth, may this my hymn with which I praise you, Father and Mother, prove efficacious. With your protection be to us the nearest of gods. May we find food and a camp with running water.

*Rigveda*, I, 185.

The above hymn from the *Rigveda* may be taken as more or less typical of the comparatively older forms of prayers used by the Indian Aryas in their religious worship. It is worth noticing that Heaven and Earth are mentioned here as the parents of other gods. May this not mean that Heaven and Earth were perhaps among the earliest of the deities worshipped by the Aryas?

There is, to lend support to this view, a philosophical equation which makes the Sanskrit *Dyaus*, the Greek *Zeus*, the Latin *Jovis* or *Ju* in Jupiter, the Anglo-Saxon *Tiw*, and the old High-German *Zio* equal to one another. The Sanskrit, the Greek, and the Latin Heaven-God, represented by the allied names in these languages, is also seen to have been conceived alike as a kind father and protector. Has not Nature become too much 'materialised' for us in these days?

The fear of sinning against the chieftain of the family suggests to us the old patriarchal form of social government as having been prevalent at the time of the composition of the hymn; the prayer for the camp with running water is obviously indicative of nomadic pastoral life. *Sáyana*, however, does not interpret the word *Jaspati* as the patriarch of the family, but makes it mean a son-in-law.

Even the earliest gods of the Aryas, such as Heaven and Earth, could not have been altogether local or tribal in their character. The Heaven-Father can be worshipped anywhere and by all tribes and communities; so also Mother-Earth. How strong was even then man's sense of dependence on the divine powers, and the consequent fear of sin! Is it a wonder if such a religion grows to be really universal?

#### SAYINGS OF SRI PARAMAHAMSA.

1. As one and the same material, viz., water is called by different names by different peoples, one calling it *water*, another *vari*, a third *aqua*, and another *pani*; so the one *sat-chit-ananda*—The Everlasting-Intelligent Bliss—is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman.

2. Two persons were hotly disputing as to the color of a chameleon. One said, "The chameleon on that palm tree is of a beautiful red color." The other contradicting him said—"You are mistaken, the chameleon is not red but blue." Not being able to settle the matter by arguments both went to the person who always lived under that tree, and had watched the chameleon in all its phases of colour. One of them said—"Sir, is not the chameleon that is on this tree of a red color?" The person replied, "Yes Sir." The other disputant said, "What do you say? How is it? It is not red, it is blue." That person again humbly replied, "Yes Sir." The person knew that the chameleon is an animal that constantly changes its color; thus it was that he said 'yes' to both these conflicting statements. The *sat-chit-ananda* likewise has various forms. The devotee who has seen God in one aspect only knows Him in that aspect alone. But he who has seen Him in manifold aspects is alone in a position to say, "All these forms are of one God and God is multiform." He is formless, and with form, and many are His forms which no one knows.

3. The light of the gas-lamps illumines various localities with varying intensity, but the life of the light, namely, the gas, comes from one common reservoir. So the religious teachers of all climes and ages are but so many lamp-posts through which is emitted the light of the spirit flowing constantly from one Almighty Source.

4. Iron, if once converted into gold by the touch of the Philosopher's stone, may be kept under the ground or thrown into a rubbish heap; it will always remain gold and will never return to its former condition. Similar is the state of him who has at heart touched even once the feet of the Almighty. Whether he dwells in the bustle of the world, or in the solitude of forest, nothing will ever contaminate him.

5. The steel sword gets turned into a golden one by the touch of the Philosopher's stone, and though it retains its former form, it becomes however, incapable of injuring any one like the steel sword. Similarly the outward form of the man who succeeds in touching the feet of the Almighty is not changed, but he no longer does any evil.

6. The lodestone-rock under the sea attracts the ship sailing over it, draws out all its iron nails, separates plank from plank, and sinks the vessel into the sea. Thus when the human soul is attracted by the magnetism of Universal Consciousness, it destroys in a moment man's sense of individuality and selfishness, and plunges the soul in the ocean of God's Infinite Love.

7. Milk mixes readily with water when brought into contact with it. Convert it, however, into butter and it no longer mixes with water but floats over it. So when the soul once attains the state of God, it may live in constant and hourly contact with innumerable unregenerate souls, but will not at all be affected by their evil associations.

8. A recently married young woman remains deeply absorbed in the performance of domestic duties, so long as no child is born to her. But no sooner a son is born to her, than she begins to neglect household details, and does not find much pleasure in them. Instead thereof she fondles the new-born baby all the live-long day and kisses it with intense joy. Thus man in his state of ignorance is ever busy in the performance of all sorts of works, but as soon as he sees in his heart the Almighty God, he finds no pleasure in them. On the contrary his happiness consists now only in serving God and doing His works. He no longer finds happiness in any other occupation and cannot withdraw himself from the ecstasy of that Holy Communion.

### THE SONG OF THE SANYÂSIN.

Wake up the note! the song that had its birth  
Far off, where worldly taint could never reach;  
In mountain caves, and glades of forest deep,  
Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame  
Could ever dare to break where rolled the stream  
Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that follows both;  
Sing high that note, Sanyâsin bold! say—

*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Strike off thy fetters! bonds that bind thee down,  
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore;  
Love, hate—good, bad—and all the dual throng.  
Know slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free;  
For fetters tho' of gold, are not less strong to bind;  
Then off with them Sanyâsin bold! say—

*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Let darkness go; the will-o'-the-wisp that leads  
With blinking light to pile more gloom on gloom.  
This thirst for life, for ever quench; it drags,  
From birth to death and death to birth, the soul.  
He conquers all who conquers self. Know this  
And never yield, Sanyâsin bold! say—

*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

• Who sows must reap,' they say, "and cause must  
bring

The sure effect; good, good; bad, bad; and none  
Escape the law. But whoso wears a form  
Must wear the chain." Too true, but far beyond  
Both name and form is Atman, ever free,  
Know thou art That, Sanyâsin bold! say—

*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

They know not truth, who dream such vacant dreams  
As father, mother, children, wife and friend.  
The sexless Self! Whose father He? whose child?  
Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?

The Self is all in all, none else exists;  
And thou art That, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

There is but One—The Free—The Knower—Self!  
Without a name, without a form or stain,  
In Him is Mâyâ, dreaming all this dream.  
The Witness, He appears as nature, soul.  
Know thou art That, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Where seekest thou, that freedom, friend, this world  
Nor that, can give? In books and temples vain  
Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds  
The rope that drags thee on. Then, cease lament,  
Let go the hold, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Say—Peace to all: from me no danger be  
To aught that lives: in those that dwell on high,  
In those that lowly creep, I am the Self in all!  
All life, both here and there, do I renounce,  
And heav'n and earth and hell all hopes and fears.  
Thus cut thy bonds, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Heed then no more how body lives or goes,  
Its task is done. Let Karma float it down,  
Let one put garlands on, another kick  
This frame; say naught. No praise or blame can be  
Where praiser, praised—and blamer, blamed—are  
one.

Thus be thou calm, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed  
Of gain reside. No man who as his wife  
Of woman thinks can ever perfect be;  
Nor he who owns, the least of things, nor he  
Whom anger chains, can pass thro' Mâyâ's gates.  
So, give these up, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Have thou no home. What home can hold thee,  
friend?

The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed; and food,  
What chance may bring, well cooked or ill; judge  
not.

No food or drink can taint that noble self  
Which knows itself. The rolling river free  
Thou ever be, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Few only know the truth. The rest will hate  
And laugh at thee, great one; but pay, no heed  
Be free, go thou, from place to place, and help  
Them out of darkness, Mâyâ's veil. Without  
The fear of pain or search for pleasure, go  
Beyond them both, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

Thus day to day, till Karma's powers spent  
Release the soul for ev'r. No more is birth  
Nor I, nor thou, nor god, nor man. The I  
Has all become, the all is I, and bliss.  
Know thou art That, Sanyâsin bold! say—  
*"Om tat sat, Om!"*

# The Brahnavadin

SATURDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 1895.

## THE VEDA'NTA RELIGION.

*Vedānta* is a name which is generally given to the Upanishads. In this connection it is interpreted to mean the *end of the Vedas*, that is, the last portion of the revealed scriptural literature of the Hindus. It is also the name of a well-known system of Indian philosophy which is mainly based on the teachings of the Upanishads. The word may, however, be more appropriately understood as *the end of all knowledge*. What, then, is really the end of all knowledge? Even the physical sciences have been said to be like the kind mother who, when asked merely to give bread, gives also the invigorating milk of ideas. So, the immediate practical utility of knowledge is certainly not the best part of it. In the transfiguration of man's mind that is brought about by means of grand, noble, and all-comprehending ideas consists largely the value of knowledge as an aid to human progress. "The ultimate problem of all thought is," it has been well remarked by a writer in the latest number of *Mind*, "the relation of the Finite to the Infinite, of the Universe to the Primal Source of Being from Whom all existence proceeds." There is certainly nothing higher for the human understanding to try to know than the nature of this relation. It is an "open secret" which very few persons are able to read intelligently at all; and even among the gifted few, who read it in one way or another, there is much room for wide differences of opinion. This relation between the Universe and its Primal Source has not been, at all times, understood anywhere in the same way; nor have the different peoples of the earth looked at it from time to time in the same light. Nevertheless man has had, all along in the course of his history, to live out his life from day to day relying upon some sort of belief in regard to this all-important relation between the Finite and the Infinite. Indeed the history of man's apprehension of this relation everywhere determines the history of his religion; for, religion is nothing other than the knowledge of this relation and the consequent adjustment of human thoughts, feel-

ings, and activities in accordance with that knowledge.

While the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgītā form the scriptural foundations of Vedāntic thought in India, the formulation of the Vedānta-philosophy is to be found in the Aphorisms (*Sūtras*) of Bādarāyana; and therein it is declared that the object of the Vedānta is to know the *Brahman*, which is the cause of the birth, existence, and dissolution of the Universe. It is clear from this that the Vedānta does not at all question the existence of the Infinite, and also that it derives the Finite itself from the Infinite. Materialism is beginning to be already so completely discredited even in the West as almost not to deserve the name of philosophy, and in the history of Indian thought it never had any really serious and important place assigned to it. The Indian mind has been too logical and too contemplative to assert that the Finite is all in all. It cannot be denied that a few Indian men of learning have occasionally *played* with materialism; but India as a whole has never been able to shake off the awe-inspiring and ever-present steadying weight of the Infinite. Therefore the Vedānta, while taking into consideration the relation between the Finite and the Infinite, has had only the choice between three alternative views to adopt, which views may be characterised as (1) mechanical, (2) organic, and (3) monistic. The first view holds both the Finite and the Infinite to be real, and conceives the relation between them to be more or less akin to that between an engine and its maker who is also its driver. This may be said to be the view of the *Dvaita-Vedānta*. The second view also holds both the Finite and the Infinite to be real, but fuses them together into a single organic whole by conceiving the relation between them to be like that between an organism and its 'vital force.' This is the *Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedānta*. The third view holds the Infinite to be the only reality, and conceives the Finite to be merely an illusory reflection or representation thereof. And this is the *Advaita-Vedānta*. In none of these schools are we led to apprehend the Infinite merely as a distant God; in all of them we may easily notice the belief in what has been aptly called the interpenetration of the spiritual and the material worlds, for the God of the Upanishads is all-pervading and is both far and near at the same time. Further, the Vedānta, however understood, knows only one God, only one

Infinite ; and man is called upon to see that the purpose of life is to help to fulfil the purpose of universal creation by himself realising, and enabling others to realise, the divineness of human nature, and its goal in the God-head. There is, however, no agreement between the various schools of the Vedânta as to the details of the exact nature of the ultimate condition of the liberated human soul. There is no exclusiveness about the religion of the Vedânta ; the gates of its temple are open for all to enter. The enlightened Vedântin is expected to make no distinction between a Brahmin, a Chandâla, a cow and a dog, between friends and foes, as well as between the virtuous and the sinful. One of the excellent features of the Vedânta is its open recognition of the ethical and spiritual oneness of man's nature.

To the Monistic Vedântin the way of knowledge is the way to *Moksha*—to liberation from the trammels of ever-recurring births and deaths. According to him God is altogether inaccessible to human thoughts and words, and all forms of worship and prayer only go to make the unconditioned appear as conditioned. Nevertheless, *Upâsanâ* or worship is recognised as a necessity even to him, as he holds it to be of great value in preparing the human soul to receive with calm illumination the great truth of its oneness with the Divine. The followers of the other two schools of the Vedânta see in God the harmonious synthesis of the most perfect ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. To them religious worship is an inviolable duty, and the way of worship is the way to *Moksha*. Then, what is the kind of worship that is enjoined on all those who follow in some way or other the teachings of the Vedânta ? The old Vedic way of worship consisted in offering prayers and sacrifices to the deities. "It is no exaggeration to state that no nation appears at the dawn of history so full of prayer and praise as the Hindu Aryans," says a Christian Missionary in a recent work of his on Vedic religion. When, however, this profusion of prayer ceases to flow from the abundance of genuine feeling in the heart, and when sacrifices lose their original significance in the way of establishing the wished-for kind of communion between the worshipper and the deity, then prayers get petrified into mere formulae, and sacrifices become altogether meaningless rituals. Worship which is, on the practical side, the essence of religion becomes the shield of hypocrisy and deceit. This does not take place before the old ideal of religion and of man's duties

is felt to be more or less inadequate in the new circumstances, and a new one is slowly beginning to get itself established. We find clear signs of such a change even in the *Satupatha-Brahmana* where in it is said :—"He who sacrifices to the *Ātman*, or the Self, is superior. One should say, 'There is he who sacrifices to the gods,' and also 'There is he who sacrifices to the *Ātman*.' He who understands that by such and such a means such and such a one of his members is rectified, and that by such and such another means such and such another of his members is restored,—he is the person who sacrifices to the *Ātman*. He is freed from this mortal body and from sin in the same way in which the serpent is freed from its worn-out skin ; and acquiring the nature of *Rik*, *Yajush*, and *Sâman*, and of the Sacrifice, he attains to heaven. On the other hand, he who understands that gods are to be worshipped with such and such an oblation, and offers it up to them, is like an inferior who pays tribute to a superior, or like a *Vaisya* who pays tribute to the king. This person does not conquer for himself so great a world as the other does." Do we not here see that the religion of self-discipline and self-culture is already trying to assert itself as against the old religion of sacrificial rituals ? It is indeed far better for a man to fortify himself against temptations, and subdue the evil that is in him, than perform rites and offer numberless sacrifices of various kinds to various deities. The object of all true worship must be not so much to please God as to make man worthy of His love. Even in the Code of Manu, which distinctly enforces caste, ceremonial laws, and ritualistic religion, we find evidence enough to indicate the existence of a strong partiality in favour of the Vedânta. "The man," says Manu, "who, recognising himself in all beings and all beings in his own self, sacrifices to the *Ātman*, enters into absolute freedom." In all probability the freedom that is referred to here is the freedom from the bondage of the Law, that is, from being subject to the operation of ceremonial and ritualistic regulations concerning society and religion. It may mean *Moksha* as well.

In the Upanishads there are many passages which clearly set forth this very change in the ideal of worship. The second *Khanda* of the *Mundakopaniṣad* emphatically declares that all those, who believe in the saving efficacy of sacrificial rituals and perform them, are foolish, ignorant, and self-sufficient men, going to ruin and destruction like the blind that are led by the

blind. In the place of elaborate rituals it enjoins austerity, faith, peacefulness, retirement into the forest, and living by the begging of food. In the very last *Anuvāka* of the *Nārāyaṇīya* portion of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, we have a passage in which the various elements of the sacrificial ritual are replaced by the elements required for character-building, obviously with the object of pointing out that Vedāntic Worship is far different from Vedic Worship. The same *Nārāyaṇīya* portion of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* speaks of truth, austerity, temperance, peacefulness, liberality, duty, children, worship in the way of kindling the sacred fire &c., mental contemplation, and resignation, as things of the highest importance, without which no man would be able to realise for himself the glory of God. The Vedāntic religion is distinctly not a religion of rituals but one of righteousness; and in another Upanishad self-restraint, charity, and mercy are naturally regarded as being very much better materials of worship than forms of rituals. In this age of individualistic self-assertion the Vedāntic discipline of self-denial may appear too rigorous, cold, and uninviting; but the seeds of salvation for individuals, as well as for communities of individuals, are always to be found only in the faithful practice of difficult self-denial. Self-assertion strengthens the bond of *Karma*, while self-denial leads to the freedom of the soul—that blissful freedom from the bondage of matter which comes to man only when he deserves it. Every soul that is bound to matter has to work out its own liberation, and nothing can shew better, than the Vedāntin's theory of *Karma*, how what a man does here makes or mars his hereafter. The unborn and immortal part of man, namely, his soul is alone responsible for the acquisition of *Moksha* either through the knowledge of truth or by deserving the grace of God. "The soul alone is the friend of the soul, the soul alone is the foe of the soul." Man's sense of moral responsibility can in no way be made stronger. It is but proper to point out that with the Vedāntin self-denial does not necessarily mean either quietism or asceticism. According to the Gîtâ it implies the willing performance of the duties incumbent upon us without attachment to the results flowing therefrom, whatever may be the rank in which we are placed to fight out the battle of life. All forms of worship are good, according to him, so far as they go to aid us in combining, in the conduct of our lives, honest and earnest work with sincere resignation and benevolent self-sacrifice;

and indeed the best form of worship is declared to be the worship of silent contemplation.

The Gîtâ recognises that all are not capable of having the same knowledge of truth and of submitting to the same discipline of self-denial, and tacitly takes it for granted that all cannot be of the same religion. "The religion of the many must necessarily be more incorrect than that of the refined and reflective few, not so much in its essence as in its forms, not so much in the spiritual idea which lies latent at the bottom of it, as in the symbols and dogmas in which that idea is embodied." This remark of a thoughtful English writer is so true that it needs no corroboration, and our own Vedāntic Scriptures wisely refrain from all particularisation of forms, symbols, and dogmas. "In whatever way people come to me," says Śrī Krishna, "in that same way do I accept them." Forms and symbols and dogmas are not at all essential to the true Vedāntic Religion. But it does not despise them, seeing that many of us cannot do without them, even when they are not of the best kind. It is said again in our Divine Lay—"Those who are devoted to other gods, and offer worship with faith, even they, Arjuna, worship me alone in a way that is not law-ordained. I am indeed the lord and receiver of all worship; those who do not know me as I am fall in consequence. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods, ancestor-worshippers go to the ancestors, spirit-worshippers go to the spirits, and those that worship me go to me. Whosoever with devotion offers to me a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or water, *that* I accept as an offering brought to me with devotion by one who has a well-disciplined soul. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as sacrifice in the fire, whatever you give, or whatever austerities you practise, O Arjuna, purpose it for me."

The Vedāntic Religion, then, believes in one and only one God, in His omnipenetrativeness, as it has been termed, and in the spiritual oneness of human nature and human destiny. It is not exclusive, and has no peculiar rites and symbols and dogmas. But it does not object to any form of worship, as long as it is in harmony with the heart of the worshipper. It enforces self-discipline and self-culture, and makes man realise the life of righteousness as the best means of worshipping God and of obtaining deliverance and bliss. It is truly catholic and wisely tolerant.



## Translations.

### VEDARTHA SANGRAHA, A DISCOURSE ON THE UPANISHADS.

By SRI RAMANUJA.

(1) Salutation to Him, who is all-pervading, who is the owner (*Seshin*) of both soul and non-soul, who reclines on *Ādisesha*, and who is faultless, infinite, and the treasure-house of all auspicious qualities.

(2) Glory indeed to the sage Yāmuna by whom has been dispelled that blinding darkness which was widely spread in the world, and which, without the sanction of revelation and reason, led to the belief that the Supreme Brahman himself, being ignorant and subject to illusion, gets into the state of *Samsāra*, or that He, bound by some external condition, loses mastery over himself, or that he is himself the seat of evil.

This is the meaning which comes out at the head of the collection of Scriptures intended for proclaiming salvation to the whole world:—namely, that the contemplation, worship, salutation, &c., of the two feet of God, accompanied with the previous knowledge of the true nature of the soul and God, and with the performance of all such duties as are associated with one's position in life and society (*Varṇāśrama dharma*), are very good, and result in the attainment of Him.

The whole collection of Vedantic sentences has been inculcated, with the object of destroying the unavoidable fears of *Samsāra*, which are born out of the love of self due to the soul entering, by reason of the flow of its *Karma*,—in the shape of merit and demerit—stored up by the beginningless ignorance, the four kinds of bodies, being those of the gods commencing with the creating Brahman, of men, of brutes, and of motionless things; and for the purpose of revealing the enjoyment of infinite and inestimable bliss in God arising out of the true self-realisation resulting from the knowledge of the nature and quality of the soul which is different from the body, of the nature and quality of the Supreme Soul who penetrates and guides all the other souls, as well as from the worship that is offered to Him.

The following are among the sentences referred to above:—

“That thou art”

“This soul is the Brahman.”

“He who abides in the soul, who underlies it, whose body is the soul, and whom the soul does not know, is thy soul (*Ātma*), the pervader, eternal.

“He is the Spirit that pervades all beings, the sinless, the celestial, divine and only one *Narayana*.”

“It is Him only that the Brahmins wish to know with the aid of the Vedas, sacrifices, gifts, austerities, and love to all beings (*Anṛśaka*).”

“The knower of the Brahman attains the highest.”

“He who knows Him thus attains immortality here; there is no other path that leads to eternal life.”

*The Nature of the Soul.*—It is devoid of the many kinds of differences due to peculiar changes in the organisation of matter in the shape of gods, men, &c. Its only attributes are intelligence and bliss. When its differences in the shape of gods, &c, due to its *Karma*, are completely destroyed, the difference due to its own nature is one that is beyond expression in speech. It is known to itself. It is of the nature of intelligence; only so much may be predicated. All souls are alike in this.

*The Nature of Antaryāmin or Pervader.*—He is the only cause of the creation, sustentation and retraction of this universe constituted of soul and non-soul (*Chit* and *Achit*), and of the relief (for man) from *Samsāra*. He is essentially different from all entities other than Himself, on account of His being the opposite of all that is evil, and the possessor of all that is good. His good auspicious qualities are boundless, inestimable, and innumerable. He is the Lord *Narayana*, the supreme spirit, who is to be realised throughout the whole designations of the All-soul (*Sarvatma*), the supreme Brahman (*Param Brahma*), the supreme Light (*Param Jyotiḥ*), the supreme Reality (the *Paratattva*), and the supreme Soul (*Paramātmā*).

The *Srutis* that reveal (to the world) His glory, teach that He is the internal soul and ruler of all things, both soul and non-soul, which on that account are called his glory (*Vibhūti*), His form (*Rūpa*), His embodiment (*Sarīra*), or His body (*Tanu*) and are also regarded as being identical with Him.

## THE ADWAITA PHILOSOPHY

By N. VAISHNANATHA Aiyar, M.A.

(Continued from page 8.)

We shall first consider how this philosophy argues out the illusory nature of the material world. It is a stain upon the illumination of the Brahman; but an apparent stain, not a real existence. *Jiva* falls into the illusion of its true existence because of ignorance as we fall into the illusion that the rope before us is a snake. Our minds unable to get free from the evils of ignorance take the world and its contents for permanent realities. We do not know how this ignorance came into existence and acquired such power for evil and why the Brahman permitted himself to be conditioned by *avidyā* and entered upon the work of creation. But that the world is an illusion may be established as a matter of logical inference and also by analogy.

What is an illusion? Existences are of three classes, real (*Sat*), imaginary (*Asat*) and illusory (*Mithya*). The *Sat* exists for ever, in the past, the present and the future; the *Asat* has no existence whatever, and the illusory exists for a time and then perishes. The Brahman is *Sat*, the hours of

a hare are *Asat*, imaginary ; and the silver in the mother-of-pearl is an illusion. The *Sat* Brahman is a permanent reality ; the second is never an object of perception and existence cannot be predicated of it ; but the last is an object of perception and so long as it is perceived it may be said to exist, though only in a relative or phenomenal sense. The world is an illusion in this sense ; it is neither a permanent entity nor an imaginary nothing, but a phenomenal fiction of the conscious Jiva. It is not a non-existence because it is a part of our knowledge, and of such knowledge as we believe to be certain and reliable so long as the conditions of perception remain the same. Distance, indistinct light, or the like circumstance gives rise to the illusion of silver in the mother-of-pearl ; so ignorance misleads us into the belief that this world is real. The moment that the Jiva liberates itself from the web woven round it by this ignorance and perceives its identity with the all-filling Brahman, that very moment sees the destruction of the fabric of the material world reared by avidya upon the false testimony of the senses.

We cannot upon the testimony of the senses declare that the world is real. This testimony can never carry us higher than a *conditional* certainty, and such certainty does not militate with the *absolute* illusion we assert of the world. We have knowledge already in our possession or are competent to acquire knowledge which has a higher degree of certainty than what the senses impart to us. When a person is under the illusion, because of the misguidance of his senses, that the rope before him is a snake, the instruction of a truth-speaking friend that it is no snake removes the conviction, however certain it appears to be while it lasts. To his mind there was not simply a sense-impression of a snake, but there was also the certainty that the object, snake, actually existed. This object also disappears along with the mental conviction as soon as the truth-speaking friend comes to his assistance. The senses continue to produce the false impression upon the mind even after the removal of the conviction from it and even after the destruction of the external object. But they do not convey the same impression alike to all persons ; and even in the case of the same person, their information varies from moment to moment and from place to place. We saw just now that the perception which claimed for a time the highest degree of certainty to itself and led us to imagine an object outside us as its basis, proved after all illusory, because of the information from the friend whose senses brought him a different story. The belief in the existence of the world as a real entity may be removed similarly by the initiation into the truth by a teacher. The initiated would see the fallacious nature of the impression of a world received through the senses and also of the imagined objective source of that impression, even though he may be receiving all the while the old impression of reality from the misleading fiction. It must be admitted that the impression so long as it lasts conveys to us a certain kind of knowledge ; but this knowledge cor-

responds not to a real existence outside of us, but only to an illusion.

That the senses are unreliable may be shown in various ways. It often happens that the knowledge brought to us by one of them is contradicted and reduced to naught by what we get from another. Where the eye sees water, touch feels nothing ; and what is perceptible to touch is invisible to sight. The case for the senses is not strengthened even when one of them comes to the support of another and both bring us the same information. For the certainty thus obtained is only a present certainty and cannot possibly be extended into the past or the future. Knowledge is not all of it derived exclusively from the senses, and these cannot be the media of imparting to us knowledge of ultimate truths. The distinction between our perishable body and imperishable soul, for example, is a true distinction ; but it is not appreciable to our senses. Again knowledge as we understand it, is only of the relative. Of the absolute we can know nothing, because of the impossibility of establishing a relation between the two non-correlatives, knowledge and the absolute. The very fact that we have a knowledge of the material world presupposes its unreality ; for if real, it cannot be known.

We shall now consider a few of the objections commonly raised against the view of the material world taken by the Advaitin. It has been said that if the world and the objects in it are illusory, how can they serve our practical purposes as they do serve ? How can they contribute to our pleasures and otherwise rouse our feelings ? The assumption involved in the objection that illusions cannot possibly be employed for practical purposes is not valid. The snake imagined in the rope rouses the feeling of fear in us as much as if it were a real snake. Even dreams leave their effects upon us. There cannot therefore be a valid inference from the phenomena of our feelings to the noumenal existence of objects.

The illusion of silver in the mother-of-pearl presupposes a knowledge of silver and an actual experience of that real substance. To imagine an illusory world, therefore, the Jiva must have had experience somewhere of a real world. But is this prior experience an essential prerequisite ? We have the false impression of the identity of the soul and the body even though we could not have had any prior experience of such an identity. The illusion in the present life may be simply the continuance of a similar illusion to which we were certainly subject in past lives. And a prior illusion is sufficient to cause a subsequent illusion ; hence it follows that the prior experience need not be of a non-illusory world ; nor is it necessary that the present illusion and the illusion in the past, to which we causally trace it, should be similar, as the illusion of red color in a white conch cannot be referred back to an actual experience in the past.

The objection here noticed relies upon the psychological law of sensationalism that the mind cannot transcend the limits set to it by the senses. If our



knowledge is entirely the product of sensations, combined and re-combined in manifold ways, if of what lies beyond the reach of the senses we can learn nothing and if the mind cannot add to its contents any element not derived from the senses, it is but a just criticism on the Advaita theory of the illusion of the world, that the conception of such an illusion cannot be framed by the mind because of the absence in it of the materials which the senses could not have supplied to it. There is no world and hence no sense experience of it. Without such an experience the conception is impossible even as an illusion. The reply above given is partly the Platonic theory of a remnant in this life of the experiences of past lives; and reliance is also placed upon the power of the mind to construct conceptions different from such as we derive from actual experience. There is, however, the fact that in framing such conceptions, the mind has at hand only such sensations as the senses have already roused in it, and is unable to create an element of its own unaided by the senses.

The Advaitin regards the world as analogically the same as the silver perceived in the mother-of-pearl; and infers its illusion from the proved illusory nature of that silver. He postulates the existence in the mother-of-pearl of a 'manifested' silver and regards it as the creation of Avidyā. This assumption of a transitory existence is necessitated by his classification of objects into existence, non-existence and illusion, instead of the usual classification in which the third, illusion has no place. But is it true that such a 'manifested' or 'reflected' silver comes into existence for a time in the mother-of-pearl to answer to the false perception produced in us? Have we evidence for the evanescent existence of this hypothetical substance? In the absence of such evidence the philosophy of the Advaitin must necessarily crumble down to nothing. But according to him, direct perception of what does not exist is impossible; the silver must be there in the mother-of-pearl to become the object of perception. He does not accept the psychological phenomenon of a constructive perception of what is not present. The mind often builds up a whole even when it is in actual possession of only one of the elements of that whole. The gait of a man walking at a distance is perceived to be similar to the gait of a well-known friend; and we infer the presence at once of all the elements that go to make up the friend. This inferential process is so rapid and instantaneous that we fail to distinguish between the perceived part of the conception and the inferred part. We *perceive* but the brightness of silver in the mother-of-pearl and *infer* its actual presence with all its attributes. It is true that a direct perception of what does not actually exist is impossible. But this must be taken along with the other truth that we often confound inference with perception. If this is kept in mind, we would see that the silver is not perceived directly but is only inferred; and that its existence in the outside is not, therefore, a necessary inference from our imagined perception

of it. But this ground of objection to the inference of external existence from perception does not seem to have suggested itself either to the Advaitin or to his opponent; and the arguments on both sides are consequently beside the point. In the same strain, the Advaitin says that the direct perception of imaginary objects like the horns of a hare, should be possible if the direct perception of a non-existing object were possible. The one is, in his eyes, as much of an absurdity as the other; the object *perceived* should be real, and should be present to the perceiver at the moment of perception. Otherwise how can we dislodge the nihilist from his universal scepticism? Do we not assert the existence of that of which we have a direct consciousness, each of his own self? As we perceive objects outside us by means of the senses, we perceive the inner self by means of consciousness. The evidentiary value in this respect of these two perceptions is the same. The one saves us from nihilism, and the other necessitates the postulation of the existence of the object of perception at the time of perception.

The same objection that the object of perception, the silver in the mother-of-pearl, or the world, is either a permanent reality or is not to be brought under the category of existence, two alternatives both of which are repugnant to Advaitism is met by another argument. Perception presupposes a connection between the perceiving senses and the perceived object. It follows from this that in the absence of silver to connect itself with the eye, no perception can arise. It should not be said, the Advaitin continues, but a present perception is possible even in the absence of the object said to be perceived, as the required connection between the senses and the object may be established if the mental effect of past experience be present. Past experience can introduce the object only to our memory, and cannot possibly give rise to the mental phenomenon of a direct perception of an external object. On the same ground the Advaitin rejects the theory of the logicians that the silver which we have experienced elsewhere is introduced into the present perception by a mistake, as the connection between the senses and the object, which is an indispensable condition of perception, is impossible when the object is away from us, however certain we may be of its existence.

Can then silver be present at the time of perception and yet its constituent parts absent? Or are we to suppose that these also are present to make up the perceived silver? The Advaitin may well answer these questions in the affirmative and say that at the time of perception silver with all its constituent parts was present. But the superinducement of the idea of silver on the mother-of-pearl seems to have stood too prominently before his mind to permit him to take this bold step; and his reply is consequently a half-hearted recognition of the psychological dilemma. Perception presumes an object; this object is an illusion and is only the fiction of ignorance. But perception is a real mental fact, and consciousness bears testimony to

it. Have we then a true effect from a false cause? Why not? Do we not stand afraid of an imagined snake? Is there not in this instance a real effect, fear, from a false cause, snake? The impression of the blueness of the sky is a fact; but does it correspond to an objective and external reality? In the same manner the impression we have of a world outside us does not necessarily correspond to an external reality. We may admit the reality of the phenomenon of perception and yet say that the object perceived is illusory. The juggler creates a world of his own which we see and in which we imagine that we even move and act. But has this world of the juggler any substratum of reality? The world before us is of the same kind as the creations of the juggler. The causes that combine to produce the impression of silver are the brilliancy of the mother-of-pearl, the impression of silver in our minds due to past experience, distance, &c. These constitute the basis for the creation of silver in the outside as well as for the illusory perception of it in us. The object and the perception are concomitant effects of the same set of causes, originating at one and the same instant and continuing in existence for the same interval of time. There is, therefore, no room for the objection that this silver should serve, if a truly present object, the practical purposes served by actual silver. The one is but the manifested or reflected effect of the other; and this reflected silver may rouse the impressions and feelings and lead to the same actions as the real object, even though it is itself illusory. Objects are of three kinds, ultimate entities (पारमार्थिक), relative or conditioned objects (व्यावहारिक), and reflected or manifested objects (प्रतिभासिक). The first alone is *sat*, truly exists; the second exists for a pretty long period of time and disappears only at the approach of the knowledge of the absolute truth—that the self and the Brahman are identical; and the last takes its origin in perception and remains till its illusory nature is made clear by knowledge—knowledge not of the absolute, but of the phenomenal. The Brahman, the material world, and the snake in the rope, or the silver in the mother-of-pearl, are examples of these three kinds of objects.

Having thus disposed of the material world, the Advaitin next takes up for investigation the nature of the soul and its connection with the body on the one hand and with the Brahman on the other. The soul is not certainly the body, though we are often misled into the mistake of identifying the one with the other. When a person asserts that he is a man, that he is a Brahmin, that he is blind, &c., he is obviously under the sway of illusions. The knowledge of the distinction between the soul and the body is not within the reach of the unthinking, and even after we become conscious of it, we often lose sight of it in our daily transactions. This illusion lasts till we are liberated from the coils of *avidyā* by *vidyā*; till then we fancy a relation to subsist between the two, though in truth the two are unrelated. There cannot possibly be any bond

of relation between the two, seeing that they are of such opposite natures. The soul is the one true entity of the universe, all-embracing and eternal, while the body is an evanescent illusion, which lasts only so long as the soul is subject to the power of *avidyā* and vanishes the moment that it recollects its true nature. Some have described the relation between the soul and the body as one of co-ordination in space (संयोग). But this co-ordination in space is a relation that obtains between the Jīva on the one side and all objects whatever on the other, because of the all-pervasiveness of the former. It does not stand to the body alone in this special relation. If this is all the connection between the two, we may admit its existence and yet deny that the soul and the body stand related in any manner. Nor can the relation between them be one of master and servant, or of the owner and the owned. I own not only my body, but also my house, my cow, &c., which properties of mine do not thereby become parts of my bodily frame. Again it cannot be a relation of "guidance under the will," as our bodily movements disappear when our limbs are paralysed. The connection between the two is thus only an illusion. Even after we acquire the knowledge that the soul is not the body, we localise our sensations and feelings in it and speak of it as the I, the self. It is this localisation of our feelings and the seemingly direct perception of the identity between the body and the soul that we have to overcome by inferring a distinction between the two. This false perception persists in the minds of all and is capable of so persisting, till the moment in which the Jīva actually attains to oneness with the Brahman, the moment of *Brahmasākshātkāra*.

(To be continued).

## Correspondence.

### THE SELF-IMPOSED STRUGGLE.

In the state of reverie or dream, when we are the creators of our own world, we can imagine or dream of extended bodies and surfaces, such as, the sun, the moon, the mountain, the river, the sky, the ocean, &c. Then we can imagine only what we have perceived before, and although we may combine the elements of the things previously perceived anew, we cannot create anything which we had not experienced in some shape or other beforehand. This shows that our mind of itself has a faculty of conceiving space, although the conception has been derived from something independent of our mind, namely, the objects of our perception. Those objects are the cause of rousing the slumbering faculty of spacial conception inherent in our mind. In the case of reverie or dream space is a purely mental form, and hence must be without any extension. Now let us consider it as perceived in our

waking state. In my previous discourse I tried to prove the relative nature of space, and the non-existence of any permanent and definite form of extension. As in our reverie or dream space is purely of a mental nature and has its place only in our mind, similarly may it not be concluded that the infinite space outside and independent of us has its place in the infinite and independent mind of a Being whom we call God? "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." This conclusion is the only one which can reconcile the universally accepted belief that in the beginning there was only One, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Eternal, Pure, Independent, Absolute being, named God. Creation is the manifestation of His Eternal Will. It proceeds from His Will. From Him proceed creation, preservation, and destruction. Man is created in His image; and therefore, as he is merely the image of the Real, and is wholly dependent on Him, he possesses only very little power, either physical or mental, and even that not for long. He is able to build houses, erect towers, and monuments, span rivers by bridges, dig long winding ditches, remove mountains, defy space and time by means of electricity, and create worlds for himself by means of his fertile imagination so as to forget the real by his ideal creation, he is able to do all these things with that very little power which has been allotted to him. Nay, he can do more. If these things do not please him, if the world with its infinite charms cannot find any attraction for him; if the loving look of his wife, the sweet smile of his children, the pleasure and the power of luxury and of wealth, the allurements of name and fame and the many other things, which this world affords, lose all their savour for him, he can easily dispense with all these things, start for his true home, and find eternal bliss in going up to Him from whom he came. This process I described in a way in my previous discourse. To-day let me try to dwell once more upon that subject in another light.

When the external world loses all its charms for a man, his mind naturally turns to itself. From that time the man is really entitled to study and think of philosophy, for then he will naturally devote himself entirely to unravel the mystery of his own existence, as there is nothing else to draw him away from such a pursuit.

In this process of philosophical self-examination he at once perceives that his physical and mental states have been changing from moment to moment in the course of his life, and that nevertheless he has been feeling himself to be the same man unaffected by the variations in his mental and moral conditions. In so doing he marks his own plastic nature. When his body was that of a child he thought himself to be a child, when his body was weak, he thought himself weak, when his body was strong, he thought himself strong, when his body was that of a youth, he felt himself to be young and so on. But all these different circumstances have not the least affected his self-identity. He feels himself to be merely a looker-on of the long-winding panorama of the outer life. He finds that what

may be called his self has the peculiar power of adapting itself to the conditions of the body. In a weak body it is weak, in a strong one it is strong, in a feverish one it is feverish, in a dyspeptic one it is dyspeptic and so on. But of itself it is neither weak nor strong nor feverish nor dyspeptic; it is pure identity, the witness of all these, and other states. He also finds that this self is neither a male nor a female, neither a Brahman nor a Sudra, neither a Hindu nor a Mussalman, neither a Christian nor a Buddhist, and that it is neither of this nor of that class or nation or sect, because all these distinctions savour of externality, and so belong to the external world. But this self is something internal which is unchangeable. He finds too that although his childhood youth and manhood, &c., are, no more, his self survives them all; so he finds his self to be the one unchanging entity in a changeful world, without any name or form, or caste, or creed, without fear or hope, pleasure or pain, free from all physical bondages. When it comes in contact with bodily frames it acquires all the aforesaid and many other attributes, although essentially and by nature it has none, as a pure crystal, without any colour of its own, partakes the colours of the coloured things that come in contact with it. Ultimately he finds the self to be beyond the domain of space and time, absolute and so indivisible,\* full in itself, a pure consciousness. Then he concludes, that since this is true of his self, it must also be true, of the selves of all other individuals like himself, for "no one examines all the grains of rice that boil in a pot to see whether they are well cooked or not," says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, "for the examination of a single grain is a sufficient guarantee for all the others." Therefore he finds that his self is the Self-Universal, One and Absolute. The selves of the highest and the lowest beings are one and the same essentially.

Now it may be asked, if in reality there is only one soul in all, whence comes this diversity of souls in every individual? We are born with the idea that every man has an independent soul. Yes, so it is; but that does not prove that there is any *essential* diversity of souls in individuals. It is indeed true that there is an innumerable number of images of the sun reflected in ponds, lakes, rivers, seas, waves, &c.; but that does not prove that there are many suns. The sun is one, only it appears to be many when reflected in water or glass, &c. Such is the case here. The Universal soul is reflected in every individual -- whence springs the diversity. When a man comes to know this true Self, of which he is an image, and becomes one with it, he then finds himself reflected in all.

When he reaches that supreme state, and gains a permanency there, he is one with the Eternal, Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient Mind -- the Universal Soul; that is, he finds himself to be the Brahman. He is then above all troubles and

\* For if he thinks of dividing the absolute, then it is no more absolute but relative, and also he cannot even imagine of dividing what is beyond space and time. So he really is his self to be *Atman*, that is, without any part undivided.

turmoils of the World, free from all its cares and anxieties, seeing himself in all, and all in himself, and feels himself to be the One Soul of the entire creation. Now he exclaims with the great Maharshi Ashtāvakra, "The universe has emanated from me, it is destined to end in me, as an earthen vessel loses itself in earth at last, as the waves die in water, as a golden ornament losing its form becomes gold in the end. O joy! I bow down to my own eternal Self, which has no end, even when all beings, from the highest to the lowest, with the entire universe die. O joy! I bow down to myself, as I am alone without a second, and even though I have a body, I neither come nor go, for I cover the whole universe. O joy! I bow down to myself, for there is none abler and cleverer than myself, as I make my body hold the universe, without even touching it. O joy! I bow down to myself who have nothing or have all that can be comprehended by thought and language."

Now if such is the case with every man's self, then the question naturally arises what induces the Absolute One to forsake eternal bliss and court the infinite troubles and tortures of an ever-fluctuating world, what great attraction is there for Him to forsake the state of sweet quietude to be drifted hither and thither amidst the lashing waves of the innumerable turns of fortune and of events? What power is there that can obscure the Omniscience and limit the Omnipotence of the Universal Mind? All do not give the same answer to this question. Some say that Avidyā or Nescience has power to blind the eye of Omniscience, and curtail the power of Omnipotence. She is an independent power co-eval with creation, and its sole Mistress; for all activities both mental and physical proceed from her.

Now let us see whether she is independent of, or subservient to, the Brahman. Since the self of man, however blinded it may be by the nameless power of Nescience, retains its original character in some degree, it will not be amiss, if we judge of the Highest Self or Brahman, by studying the characteristics of the lower self, or humanity. It has been asserted that this Nescience is the only cause of bringing woe to the human self,—otherwise free and absolute. But it is also true at the same time that she is the cause of all the pleasures and enjoyments, both physical and mental, that a man enjoys here. All the different shades of feelings, pleasurable or painful, all sorts of desire, and all kinds of intellectual activity proceed from her, for Brahman or pure Self cannot be all these or any of these. It is pure consciousness, pure existence and beatitude itself, without the least trace of activity, beyond space and time, and so indivisible and absolute. Nescience begins with duality and reigns in diversity. She is the mother of Brahman, Vishnu, and Maheswara, the authors of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. She is the source of both good and evil, law and lawlessness, kindness and cruelty, sympathy and antipathy, pleasure and pain, heat and cold, activity and inactivity, motion and rest. Hence she is known as personification

of all force, and is called Śakti. She is also called Māyā, that is, mistake or illusion, because she blinds the eye of self-knowledge.

Now Brahman being self-illuminated, Omniscient, pure and spotless, cannot be supposed to be in any way contaminated by this Māyā; and so it is likened to a drop of water upon a lotus-leaf which, although in direct contact with the leaf, does not adhere to it. When a man realizes the absolute independence of his self-illuminated self, then and not till then, this Nescience loses mastery over him.

Now let us see, whether this kind of conditioning of the Absolute Self or Brahman is brought about by Nescience against what may be called the will of the Absolute One, or not. In the Upanishads we find that the Absolute Being willed and became an active agent in the act of creation. In the *Āitareya Upanishad* we find the following passage in the very beginning,—

आत्मावा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत्  
नान्यत् किञ्चनमिषत्  
स ईक्षत लोकानुसृजा इति  
स इमान् लोकानुसृजत ॥

"In the beginning, the Self, One alone, was all this (Universe). There was nothing else besides. He, the all-knowing, looked around and thought in Himself 'I will create the worlds,' and 'created these worlds.'" This plainly shows, that the Absolute One willingly courted Nescience, and that this Nescience was within Him in a latent state, and that it depends upon the will of the Brahman to put her down or bring her out. In the Purāṇas we find that this Nescience is represented as the loving consort of the creating Brahman or Puruṣa; and she is the principal instrument in the act of creation. There the *Brahman* is no longer neuter but assumes male forms and is called Brahman, Vishnu, and Śiva, while Nescience—Māyā—becomes the female partner of these three and is called Sarsvatī, Laksmī, and Umā respectively. Even in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (I, 4, 3) we find the following passage,—

“स इममेवात्मानं द्विधापातयत्  
ततः पतिश्चपत्नी चाभवतां”

which means—He divided Himself into two parts and they became husband and wife. So we see it stated that the Puruṣa obviously finds a certain sort of pleasure in conditioning himself by courting Nescience or Prakṛiti as an otherwise free man finds pleasure in conditioning himself by marriage. But still the question arises who will forsake Omniscience to court ignorance, who will willingly deprive himself of the highest state of bliss to be drifted in the stormy sea of variegated circumstances? It may be, as it is often said, that the All-knowing sometimes plays with Ignorance (Māyā). Man cannot make certain of the motive of creation.

If we are really the absolute and Eternal God why are we not able to shake off at once the unbearable troubles and tortures of life, and break down the barrier of Nescience, and realize our own true blissful nature? To answer this, I have simply to remind you that however miserable we may be, few of us are willing to forsake this life and part for ever from those who are near and dear to us.

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We cling to this life and this world. This clinging is of a man's own choosing. Even death cannot wrench him from it; on the other hand it strengthens his attachment to this life and to this world by giving him a new and vigorous body. death is nothing other than the changing of a worn-out body for a fresh one.

When a man through misery is disgusted with this world and has a great mind to give it up at once and for ever, does he not then experience utter helplessness and inability to mend his fortune, far from feeling himself to be the Almighty God? There is no clinging then. But if he can mend his fortune, will he not be glad to stay on here and enjoy all the bliss that this life can give? Even when he wants to die his desire to play with Nescience and cling to life does still lurk within him.

Every reader of the Upanishads knows the story of Nachiketas which illustrates clearly what is meant by the complete cessation of all worldly desires.

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How many of us can stand even a hundredth part of the temptation by which Nachiketas was tried? As all attachments are self-created, it is the Self alone that willingly bears all sorts of pains. Self alone has the power to give up all attachments and know its own true essence. "Self alone is the friend or enemy of Self"—says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. The absolute independence of the true Self can be realized by a man who is blinded by Nescience, only if he sits at the feet of an enlightened *Guru* whose Self has subdued Nescience. Now, therefore, it is plain that all the struggles and troubles of this world which every human soul has a share in, are of its own making; and that this ever-changing eternal creation is nothing but a series of self-imposed struggles of the Eternal Self, who, for some reason or other, does not like to remain at rest within Himself.

So let me conclude now this my present discourse with the holy *Aupanishada* text:—

ॐ ॥ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥ आ  
शान्तिश्शान्तिश्शान्तिः ॥

*Om, Brahman is absolute, creation is absolute; Absolute proceeds from Absolute, for if Absolute is taken from Absolute the remainder is Absolute alone. Om, Peace—Peace—Peace.*

CALCUTTA.

A SANYASIN.

## Notes.

Absolute love, independent of the heart and grounded upon faith, is Religion — *Novalis*.

"Religion in fact is the inner side of civilisation, and expresses the essential spirit of human life in various ages and nations. The religion of a race is the truest expression of its character, and reflects most faithfully its attitude and aims and policy. The religion of an age shews what at that time constituted the object of man's aspiration and endeavour, as older hopes grew pale and new hopes rose on his sight."

Religion is both love and light. It is wrong to suppose that the animation of abuse can, either in religious or other matters, convert the human heart. Ignorance, weakness, and wantonness are the causes of error in thought as well as in life. Nothing, therefore, can destroy error so well as love and light. Still those who rely upon the curative power of abuse and ridicule are unfortunately a legion.

When attacked by these weapons ignorance becomes perversity, weakness becomes weaker through a new sense of misery and pain, and wantonness becomes downright wickedness. How then is a sinner to be led to repentance? This is a question that is indeed worthy of our deepest thoughts.

Even the most honest conviction has no right to be overbearing. Lessing has said—"If God held all truth shut in his right hand, and in his left nothing but the ever restless instinct for truth, though with the condition of for ever and ever erring, and should say to me, Choose! I should bow humbly to his left hand, and say, Father, give! pure truth is for Thee alone."

We are glad to learn that Swami Vivekananda is still actively engaged in the propagation of the Vedanta-religion in the West. Both he and Dr. Paul Curns are said to have recently addressed a large audience in New York in connection with the Parliament of Religious extension. May the work of spreading the truth prosper everywhere!

We draw the attention of our readers to the communication on "Self-imposed Struggle" by our Calcutta Sanyasin Correspondent appearing in our columns to-day. Read in continuation with his previous discourse on the "End of Struggles," it will, we have no doubt, be found both interesting and edifying.

God is nigh unto thee, he is with thee, he is within thee. There is no good man but hath a God within him. — *Saeco*.

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